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Selected Speeches and News Releases

July 27 - August 3, 1984

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Remarks

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

**Prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block
before the Soil Conservation Society of America, Oklahoma City,
Okla., July 30.**

I am delighted to be here this morning to participate in your keynote session. It is an occasion of great significance.

Next April 27, 1985, will be the 50th birthday of the soil conservation movement. I want to emphasize the word "movement" because that is exactly what it was. It caught the emotion of our people in the 1930's. The movement was born out of dust bowls, overgrazed ranges, overcut forests and gully erosion. It spread across the country with all the fervor of an evangelical crusade. It had heart and conviction.

As they say in 4-H, soon, we had hands to go with that heart. Farmers and ranchers organized local conservation districts. They now number nearly 3000. Public Law 46 authorized soil and water conservation programs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Soil conservation became both an art and a science, with an army of men and women trained to practice it.

The heart and the hands are well represented here today. But many of you represent the third "H"—the head. The future of soil conservation activities will be based on information.

We now have more information on conservation than ever before. It is more reliable than ever before. And we must use this information if we are to have programs that keep pace with changes on our farms and ranches.

For 38 years, the Soil Conservation Society of America has been a clear and forceful voice for the protection of our most basic food, fiber and forest production resource—the soil itself.

And you can be proud of the role you are playing now in looking to the future. A glance at your program shows the broad and up-to-date range of your concerns: solid waste, new seed technology, alternative forms of irrigation. You take the advancement of your profession seriously.

At USDA, we rely on the professional competence and dedication of our conservation people in Washington and in the field.

SCSA fosters that dedication and sets high professional standards for all who are involved in conservation work. You have USDA people here from ten of our agencies. In SCSA, they can meet and work with their counterparts from the state and local governments, the universities and other federal departments.

In this administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has made soil conservation one of its highest priorities. This golden anniversary is a golden opportunity for me to talk to you about our efforts.

But before I get into conservation, I want to discuss with you some of the problems and strengths of the U.S. farm economy. After all, conservation is part and parcel of these concerns.

It is clear to even the most casual observer that there are challenges facing American agriculture today. At the base of our problems is the fact that agriculture and the forces that affect it have undergone dramatic changes in the past half-century—and particularly in the past five years.

The agriculture we are dealing with is a whole new ballgame, but we are still trying to play it under the same old rules. Our farm policy tools have changed little in the past 50 years.

Today's farm programs are direct descendants of Depression-era policies. Clearly, the current farm bill is no longer in step with the times. Minor changes every four years are no longer enough.

We need new directions. We need flexibility. We need the ability to adapt to change.

Some of this change is beyond the farmer's direct control. As one of the most capital intensive sectors of the economy, agriculture is especially vulnerable to high interest rates. Interest expenses today account for almost 20 percent of farmers' cash outlays.

High interest rates also help maintain the strength of the dollar. Unfortunately, this strength weakens our competitive position in foreign markets. It raises the prices of our farm products abroad.

Fiscal problems even affect the basic foundation of the industry—our rich and fertile land. Since 1981, land values in some areas have fallen steadily. Many farmers find their returns cannot pay their interest costs.

But there are good things happening on the farm front.

We have been more aggressive in pursuing foreign markets. We have made it clear that the United States has regained its reputation as a reliable supplier in the global marketplace.

We have made it clear that we will challenge the subsidies and protectionism of the European Community. We have made it clear that we will continue to be an active participant in the international trade arena.

One of the most obvious and far-reaching influences on agriculture is the positive direction of the overall U.S. economy.

When President Reagan took office, he made the economy his number one priority. Today, from Maine to California a powerful economic expansion is taking place. The recent 7.5 percent gain in the Gross National Product means that economic growth in the recovery is stronger than at any time since 1950.

Inflation has plummeted. The American worker's real wages are rising. Retail sales are rising.

Each of these factors influences farmers' economic well-being. And, as you know, farmers tend to increase their investments in conservation practices when the farm economy improves.

In good times or hard times, farmers want to do what is best for their land. Soil and water conservation has been near the top of my agenda since I first came to Washington.

There are two main reasons for that emphasis. First, because it is such an important program to me personally and to the department. Second, it's been 50 years since these programs started. I felt some basic changes were needed.

After all, since then we have seen our agriculture undergo tremendous changes. We have learned so much more about soil erosion and other resource problems.

With that in mind, one of the first things I directed after I became secretary was the completion of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act process, the RCA. The result was the first comprehensive soil and water conservation program—the national conservation program—in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I am proud of that significant accomplishment.

The national conservation program guides the activities of the eight USDA agencies that have conservation responsibilities. For the first time, it establishes conservation objectives and priorities. For the first time, it focuses action on areas with critical resource problems.

At the same time, we decided that since USDA was going to have its own specific list of priorities—and stick to them—we needed to strengthen the existing partnership among federal, state, and local agencies and organizations. We realized the federal government could no longer promise to do the whole job. There would be room for state and local governments and the private sector.

Finally, we looked at all the USDA conservation programs and decided they could all work better to be consistent with conservation. Many of you are familiar with aspects of the NCP. This is because you helped develop it and you are implementing it, from inside and outside USDA.

The NCP has been moving ahead, especially in the area of targeting. I plan to get to that in more detail later.

The NCP was the first big thrust of our administration. It is the blueprint for the future—our five-year plan. We've had two more pushes since then. The second one has been to support sodbuster legislation. I know this is a priority with SCSA. We've been backing this bill since 1982.

We want to see sodbuster legislation enacted in this Congress. It has had a full airing in both Houses and is currently in conference.

We do not support the addition of a "conservation reserve" title to this bill. This should be debated next year when we look at a complete farm bill. We plan to incorporate conservation in that major bill next year.

But the sodbuster bill, by itself, is ready to go this year. It should not be delayed. I am sorry that the "conservation reserve" add-on is holding up this bill from clearing conference and reaching the president's desk.

Last December, as the third major phase of our conservation efforts, we announced several conservation initiatives for 1984. In the eight months since then, we have made significant progress in these initiatives.

— First, I made nearly \$20 million of Agricultural Conservation Program funds available in 1984 for farmers and ranchers who divert highly erodible cropland into the acreage conservation reserve for either five or ten years.

These farmers and ranchers receive 90-percent cost-sharing from the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service for the cost of planting grass or trees on those acres. They also get technical assistance from SCS on seeding grass, and from state extension foresters on planting trees.

More than 250,000 acres have been enrolled in the program, which will help us determine how effective it can be to combine a useful short-term commodity program objective with a long-term conservation objective. We will use that information in writing the 1985 farm bill.

— Second, in the Palouse Region in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, ASCS changed its regulations to encourage farmers to retain some land in perennial grasses and legumes. Instead of having to plow it to plant crops—to retain a cropping history for farm programs—they can leave it in a silo-conserving use. The land and its people will benefit.

— Third, we expanded the targeting of USDA assistance toward areas of greatest need. For 1984, we reached critical resource problem areas in 44 states and Puerto Rico.

We have found that targeting works. Intensive increases in technical and financial assistance to land owners can help bring about large improvements in resource conditions. We learned in our 1977 national resources inventory that serious erosion is not a nationwide problem. It's a concentrated problem. Yet our programs weren't concentrated.

In 1983, in our target areas, we saved 16 percent more soil per acre than in non-target areas. We saved 25 percent more water per acre in our target areas for water conservation.

Through targeting, we're getting more conservation for the taxpayer's dollar. That's why we support it. It makes the soil conservation programs of USDA fiscally responsible in today's budget climate. It makes them more credible to members of Congress, the media and the public. It makes them more responsive to the people who must care for the land. In short, we can be more effective if we tackle the "worst first."

— Fourth, we are having two major national conservation conferences in 1984. We've already held the first one—at Pete Myers' farm in the Missouri boot heel in April. I met with leaders from farm and conservation groups, state government and USDA to discuss ways of making soil and water conservation an integral part of the 1985 farm bill.

The second conference will be held Oct. 3-5 in Nashville, Tenn. It will be called "Conservation Tillage - Strategies for the Future." Your society is one of more than 60 sponsors of this important conference.

We need this conference. The quiet revolution of conservation tillage is moving ahead like a tide. Farmers use conservation tillage on three to four times as many acres as they did just ten years ago. We predict that more than 90 percent of our cropland will be planted this way by around the year 2000.

That is why the Soil Conservation Service called last winter for more research and extension on conservation tillage. And that is why the Agricultural Research Service and state universities have responded to that call by directing much of their energy to this research.

The founders of the soil conservation movement 50 years ago could not have dreamed of the information we have right now in USDA on our computers.

There has been an enormous flow of new data collected on soil and water resources and their use. Through the national conservation program and the other initiatives of this administration, we have put it to good use.

SCS has completed the most comprehensive survey ever made of this nation's soil and water conditions—the 1982 National Resources Inventory. SCS released preliminary data this spring and plans to have final data later this summer.

It was appropriate that last summer USDA chose your convention in Hartford to give the public its very first look at the 1982 NRI data.

The preliminary data give us cause to be optimistic:

- The rate of soil erosion was lower in 1982 than it was 5 years earlier.
- More acres were protected from erosion in 1982 than in 1977.
- The rate of conversion of farmland to non-farm uses was not as great as we had previously thought.

There's a lot of work still to be done in certain parts of the country on the state of our soil and water resources. But at the same time, there's no cause for gloom or pessimism. Above all, we have a higher state of awareness. Fifty years of hard work have brought this about—your hard work.

I opened my speech talking about one important date—April 27, 1985—the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the conservation movement. I'd like to close with another date—July 30, 1863—the date Henry Ford was born.

Henry Ford was neither a farmer nor a conservationist, but there are some things we can learn from him. He is famous for saying that you could have your car any color you wanted—as long as it was black. And any style you wanted—as long as it was the Model T.

He turned out millions of Model T's. He began in 1908. And he kept on making them until 1927. When Henry Ford found a good thing, he stuck to it.

But, he also knew when it was time to let go of the good thing he had and move on. When it was time to adapt to current realities. When it was time to change.

We in conservation understand that lesson. We have had a successful 50 years. We have come a long way from overgrazed ranges and overcut forests—from gully erosion and the constant threat of rural flooding.

But we have our job cut out for us for the next 50 years. A re-examination of our efforts is healthy. It will make us stronger in the long run.

I want to leave you with the thought that this administration understands and supports the need for soil and water conservation programs. We are working with you to make these programs more effective.

Together we can do the job. I'm looking to our partnership over the next 50 years.

Thank you.

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Prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block at the "Hold Our Topsoil" demonstration field day, Holly Springs, Miss., Aug. 2.

I always enjoy attending meetings like this, where farmers get together to learn new techniques and improve on old ones. There is an air of excitement—a lot of camaraderie—and shared discoveries.

Earlier this week, I attended the 39th annual meeting of the Soil Conservation Society of America. At that meeting, we discussed the birth of the soil conservation movement half a century ago.

This movement dug its roots firmly down into the windblown soils of the Great Plains and the water-ravaged soils of the South, and then spread across the Nation. Everywhere, Americans took to heart the words of Hugh Hammond Bennett—the first chief of the Soil Conservation Service and the most fervent evangelist of his day on behalf of soil conservation.

Bennett said, "Take care of the land and the land will take care of you."

One area where local people began to improve their land was right here in northern Mississippi.

Some of you remember that the forests had been cleared and planted to crops. The soils then washed away and carried with them the farmers' spirit.

Vigorous reforestation programs have since healed both the soil and the soul of this area.

Sen. John Stennis and Congressman Jamie Whitten saw firsthand those desperate days of the '30s and '40s. They know better than most what the conservation movement did for this area. They remember those times when conservation and reforestation literally meant life or death here.

They know that no area in our land has a greater debt to soil and water conservation. That is why they have been among the strongest leaders and most fervent supporters of our soil and water conservation programs.

Congressman Whitten could not be here today, even though there's no place he would rather be. A heavy schedule of hearings before the House Committee on Appropriations has kept him in Washington.

People in this region understand that soil and water conservation is a lifelong job. So when the light, sloping soils of the region began eroding heavily again in the '70s with the coming of extensive soybean culture, they knew they had to do something.

By this time, Sen. Stennis and Rep. Whitten had been joined by other voices equally committed to the stewardship of the land and water. Sen. Cochran became a leading advocate of soil conservation programs in the Congress. On the home front, Commissioner Ross and state conservationist Gene Sullivan of the Soil Conservation Service lent their considerable talents to the cause and one result is this series of "Hold Our Topsoil" field days.

Last year's statewide HOT field day at Bolton was a huge success. The seven field days held throughout the state this year have been even more successful. And next year, one field day in each county will give all the farmers in the state the opportunity to see for themselves how conservation improves the land and enriches their lives.

I would like to thank Rod Foil, director of this station, for hosting this event. It's exciting that so many different groups are participating. Local agribusiness has been generous in its support. And you have to be flattered that other states have seized upon the idea and held similar projects.

What is most exciting to me is how quickly farmers have made conservation practices an integral part of their operations. Farmers in Mississippi have adopted conservation tillage, for example, to the point where they used this soil-saving practice on nearly one of every three acres planted last year.

It is important for all of us to make soil and water conservation a daily habit on our farms. I do back on my farm in Illinois.

I know that in good times or hard times, farmers want to do what is best for their land, and if they can, they will. As the overall U.S. economy improves, so will the farm economy. That will make it easier for you to invest in soil and water conservation practices.

For our part, we will continue to provide you with the conservation support you need and deserve. Soil and water conservation has been near the top of my agenda since I first came to Washington. It is an important program to me personally to the department and to the American people.

Last December, I announced several conservation initiatives for 1984. In the eight months since then, we have made significant progress in these initiatives. I'd like to bring you up to date on what has happened.

The initiative that most directly concerns you is the targeting of additional soil conservation personnel and cost sharing to areas of greatest need. The Soil Conservation Service began sending additional people to these critical resource problem areas in 1981.

One of these areas includes this very county and 13 others in northern Mississippi. In 1982, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service began to earmark some Agricultural Conservation Program funds for accelerated assistance to the same areas.

We expanded targeting in 1983, when we designated an additional 18 Mississippi counties for accelerated assistance, and again in 1984. Now, a total of 32 counties in northern Mississippi and the Bluff Hills are targeted.

For 1984, SCS has allocated \$915,000 over its normal allowance to Mississippi for extra technical assistance to land owners. ASCS has added \$510,000 to its ACP allowance for Mississippi.

Targeting works. Intensive increases in technical and financial assistance to land owners can help bring about large improvements in resource conditions.

Here in Mississippi in 1983, SCS had about 1/3 more conservationists and technicians in these upper 14 counties than in 1981 before targeting. This beefed-up staff was able to reduce soil erosion by about six tons per acre on every acre assisted. The additional employees in the targeted area reached 30,000 acres that we otherwise could not have helped.

We can cite similar successes in all seven states in the TVA region. Besides Mississippi, we have been targeting in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee since 1981. We established targeted areas in Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia in 1983.

A second initiative: I made \$20 million of ACP funds available in 1984 for farmers and ranchers who divert highly erodible cropland into an acreage conservation reserve for either five or ten years. ASCS provides 90-percent cost-sharing for the expense of planting grass or

trees on those acres. SCS provides technical assistance on seeding grass, and state extension foresters advise on planting trees.

Mississippi farmers have signed up more than 3,000 acres for the program—about 2,600 for conversion to grass and over 400 for conversion to trees—out of a nationwide total of about 250,000 acres. The program will help us determine how effective it can be to combine a useful short-term commodity program objective with a long-term conservation objective.

Another initiative is an upcoming national conference on conservation tillage in Nashville in early October.

Conservation tillage is the most significant way of producing crops and simultaneously controlling soil erosion.

Conservation tillage systems can provide maximum soil protection with minimum inputs of energy and labor.

In short, conservation tillage saves soil. It saves oil. And, it saves toil.

Farmers have turned to the quiet revolution of conservation tillage so much that they now use it on three to four times as many acres as they did just 10 years ago. We predict that 90 percent of our cropland will be planted this way by around the year 2000.

As I mentioned earlier, farmers in Mississippi and other states in this region are in the thick of this revolution.

SCS called last winter for more research and extension on conservation tillage. The Agricultural Research Service and state universities responded by directing much of their energy to this research. And conservation tillage is only one of several conservation areas that ARS is researching. ARS has made soil and water conservation one of its six top research areas for the eighties.

The Mississippi State University network of agricultural and forestry experiment stations also is moving forward with conservation research. Rod Foil and the others leading this research have every reason to be proud of their accomplishments.

A final initiative is a conference that already has been held—a session involving leaders from farm and conservation groups, state government and USDA. At that conference, we discussed ways of making soil and water conservation an integral part of the 1985 farm bill.

We were encouraged by the group's consensus that the bill should include strong conservation provisions. One leader said that conservation should be the "centerpiece" of the bill.

The time is right. The administration, the Congress and the public support strong soil and water conservation programs.

When I announced these initiatives, I reminded USDA employees that conservation is everybody's business. I reminded them that cooperation on resource conservation must be a top priority for the coming year. They have responded well to that call.

The cooperation shown at this field day reflects the spirit that made America great neighbor—helping neighbor. It also reflects a government that listens to the people by conducting research directed at specific, locally identified problems by reaching out to young people and teaching them the importance of caring for our natural resources by taking concerted action toward shared goals.

But in the end, you are the key—you who till the soil. You must want to do the job if it is to have a chance for success. This field day shows that you want it, that you can do it and that you will do it.

Thank you.

#

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

USDA PROPOSES REVISIONS TO TRITICALE STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, July 30—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is requesting public comments on a proposal to revise the way it will grade triticale that contains castor bean seeds or smut.

Triticale, a rye-wheat cross, is a cereal grain produced in small volume.

Kenneth A. Gilles, administrator for USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service, said that in an initial review of the standards that began last December, public comment favored retaining the standards to aid in marketing.

The proposal would reduce the number of castor bean seeds allowed in a 1000 gram sample of triticale from two to one. "U.S. Sample grade" would be assigned to samples that contain more than one castor bean seed, a large, bean-like toxic seed rarely found in grain.

The proposal would eliminate the requirement that renders triticale sample grade when contamination by smut is so great that one or more of the grade requirements cannot be determined. Seed treatment and other improvements have reduced the amount of smut detected in the grain to the point that it rarely is graded sample grade based on smut.

The proposal is scheduled be published in the July 31 Federal Register. Written comments may be sent by Sept. 29, to Lewis Lebakken, Jr., Information Resources Management Branch, USDA, FGIS, Room 0667-South, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone: (202) 382-1738.

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NEW CENTER TO SPEED GENETIC ENGINEERING OF CROPS

BERKELEY, Calif., July 31—Formation of a Plant Gene Expression Center to speed the genetic engineering of crops to help meet tomorrow's food and fiber needs was announced here today by an official of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Orville G. Bentley, assistant secretary of agriculture for science and education, said the new center will be a joint venture involving USDA's Agricultural Research Service, the California Agricultural Experiment Station and the University of California, Berkeley campus.

He said the center will be based at the USDA agency's Western Research Center in Albany, Calif. Staffing and remodeling of facilities will begin immediately.

Ira Michael Heyman, chancellor of the university at Berkeley, said the center "will exploit biotechnology to produce genetically engineered crops, thereby enhancing traditional plant breeding methods.

"Bioengineering also will provide new crops for new uses, including feedstocks for industry."

University scientists will help staff the center, Heyman said at ceremonies held on the university campus.

Bentley said research undertaken at the center will be jointly planned and pursued by USDA and the university. He said USDA's research agency will initially provide annual funding of \$4 million, while industry and various public institutions eventually will contribute a similar amount.

According to Bentley, the University of California was selected "after a long search for a federal-state partnership that will be a focal point of advanced research in biotechnology for plant genetics."

Terry B. Kinney, Jr., administrator of USDA's research agency, said that in addition to doing basic research in biotechnology the center also will operate through a consortium to "reach out and draw on the expertise and ideas of the existing science and agriculture research community, both public and private."

James B. Kendrick, Jr., vice president for agriculture and university services, University of California, said "the center will put its research products into the hands of scientists anywhere who are dedicated to the genetic improvement of plants."

Initially, the center will operate with a director and a core staff of ten senior scientists, two of whom will be program leaders, Kinney said. Each senior scientist will be supported by two to six associate scientists, one to four technicians, and the most modern instrumentation, he said.

When the center is fully operational, he said, it will "integrate its efforts with major centers of biotechnology, in effect establishing a network that could embrace most of the world's top researchers in plant biotechnology."

Kinney said he and the director of the center will receive counseling from a team of science advisers, each adviser an expert in an essential phase of the research.

These advisers will include representatives from the National Academy of Sciences, the National Science Foundation, an agricultural professional society, a state experiment station, an industrial association, an international agricultural institution or foundation, a member of a group specifically dedicated to biotechnology, and a scientist from USDA's research agency.

Kinney said studies at the new center will augment the agency's 114 biotechnology research projects in plant and animal sciences now underway at 31 locations. These projects have been funded for \$15.4 million this year, he said.

Among current agency research involving biotechnology, Kinney said, are projects for:

— Devising a way to microinject genetic material into plants whose tough

cell walls now limit the practice to animals and human cells.

— Genetically engineering a vaccine against vesicular stomatitis, a viral

disease of livestock that also affects humans.

— Transferring organelles and their DNA genes between plant species so

that breeders can raise crop yields or impart resistance to herbicides, pests, or diseases.

Heyman said establishing the center in the San Francisco Bay area places it amidst the world's highest concentration of public and private genetic engineering research, including at least seven companies.

He noted that the area's educational institutions conducting research in biotechnology include the Universities of California at Berkeley, Davis, and San Francisco; Stanford University and Carnegie-Stanford.

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USDA PROPOSES NEW RESTRICTIONS TO DETER KHAPRA BEETLE

WASHINGTON, July 31—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed tightening import restrictions to keep the khapra beetle, one of the world's most destructive grain pests, out of the United States.

"The changes are necessary to protect U.S. grain and other stored products against this insect, which each year causes millions of dollars of damage worldwide," said Bert Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Hawkins said the khapra beetle cannot fly and is spread entirely by shipping and trade. He said USDA inspectors intercept hundreds of the hitchhiking pests at U.S. ports of entry each year, and that a widespread infestation of graineries was eradicated from this country in the 1950s. U.S. taxpayers have also had to foot the bill for eliminating a number of localized infestations of the pest in recent years in New Jersey, New York and Texas, he said.

The proposed restrictions would apply to all khapra beetle infested countries, which are: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Burma, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Upper Volta.

These articles would be involved: plant gums shipped unpackaged as bulk cargo, used jute or burlap bagging which contains cargo or is used as packing material and the cargo in such bagging or packing material.

Examples of packing material include filler, wrapping, ties, lining, matting, moisture retention material or protection material.

Comments on the proposal should be sent until Oct. 1 to: Thomas O. Gessel, Regulatory Coordination Staff, USDA, APHIS, Rm. 728 Federal Bldg., 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md., 20782. Comments

received may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

#

USDA AND TVA SIGN EROSION-CONTROL AGREEMENT

HOLLY SPRINGS, Miss., Aug. 2—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block and Tennessee Valley Authority Board Member Richard Freeman today signed an agreement committing the two agencies to reducing soil erosion in a seven state area.

Representatives of the seven states—Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia—will also sign the agreement, Block said.

These states are among the ten states in the U.S. having the highest average annual sheet and rill erosion rates on cultivated cropland, Block said.

The agreement involves a program of information and education and research and pilot projects aimed at reducing serious soil erosion in 201 counties in the seven states. It expands a 1979 agreement which covers erosion control in Tennessee only.

Block and Freeman signed the agreement at an erosion-control demonstration at the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. The demonstration, part of a statewide “Hold Our Topsoil” campaign, is one kind of project the agreement is intended to support.

#

NEW YORK ZOO CHARGED WITH VIOLATING CEASE-AND-DESIST ORDER

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have charged the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation again with operating Brooklyn’s Prospect Park Zoo below minimum animal health standards required by federal law.

According to Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the zoo was operating under a 1982 administrative law judge's order requiring compliance with the federal Animal Welfare Act. New July-August 1983 incidents violate this order, he said.

USDA has charged that a stumped tail Macaque at the zoo died after it was scalded. Burns covered approximately 80 percent of the monkey's body, he said. The incident allegedly was not reported to supervisory zoo officials for approximately two days. USDA also said the Macaque was not provided immediate and adequate veterinary care. The monkey died about 11 days after the scalding, he said.

Other federal charges are that the Prospect Park Zoo failed to maintain an adequate veterinary care program and did not employ enough staff to properly care for most of its monkeys and apes.

City officials can request a hearing on the USDA charges before an administrative law judge. Failure to answer constitutes admission of the charge.

#

HEARING SET ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO 14 SOUTHEASTERN MILK MARKETING ORDERS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a public hearing Tuesday, Aug. 7, in Atlanta, Ga., on proposals to amend 14 federal milk marketing orders in the southeastern states.

Edward T. Coughlin, a dairy official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the hearing will start at 9:30 a.m. at the Sheraton Atlanta Airport hotel, 1325 Virginia Ave.

The proposed amendments would:

- Add 20 cents a hundredweight to the Class I differential of 11 milk orders during the months of September 1984 through February 1985.

- Provide for hauling credits out of the respective pools during the same period for supplemental milk bought from other federal order markets.

— Amend the base-excess plans of eight orders to allow producer bases to be interchangeable among the orders during the September 1984-August 1985 period.

The hearing was requested by Dairymen, Inc., a cooperative association that represents a substantial number of dairy farmers supplying milk to the marketing order areas.

The affected milk marketing orders are:

Upper Florida, Tampa Bay, Southeastern Florida, Georgia, Tennessee Valley, Greater Louisiana, Alabama-West Florida, New Orleans-Mississippi, Memphis, Nashville, Paducah, Fort Smith, Central Arkansas, and LouisvilleLexington-Evansville.

The hearing notice is scheduled to be published in the Aug. 3 Federal Register. Copies also may be obtained from any of the milk order market administrators, or from the Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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